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Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2011/12

Summary

The present report provides an overview of major developments in inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) covering the period 2011/12. The report focuses on key system-wide policy, and operational and management activities undertaken by CEB to advance a coherent United Nations system response to intergovernmental mandates and priorities. The report also highlights main activities of the three pillars of CEB, the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, in promoting inter-agency cooperation on matters of system-wide concern.

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I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to resolution 2008 (LX) of the Economic and Social Council, the present report provides an annual overview of the work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for the period covering the Board's fall 2011 session and spring 2012 session, held in October 2011 and April 2012, respectively.

2. In response to General Assembly resolution 66/8, which endorsed the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee on Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-first session, the present annual overview report highlights major activities carried out under the aegis of CEB to enhance system-wide coherence and coordination of the United Nations system in support of and in conformity with intergovernmental mandates. To this end, the Secretary of CEB has held interactive sessions to brief Member States on the sessions of CEB. In addition, exchanges with Member States were also carried out by officials of the Board's secretariat. Detailed reporting on the semi-annual sessions of CEB and its subsidiary machinery can be found on the relevant websites of the Board (www.unsceb.org and www.undg.org).

3. Over the past two decades, the world has been witnessing major changes in the global political and economic landscape that have affected almost every aspect of human life. At the same time, the benefits of globalization have not been shared equally among and within countries. The world's ecosystems are deteriorating rapidly, and environmental degradation is affecting every region and every country. The need for a common vision for the future of the planet and renewed political commitment to put the world on the pathway to more sustainable development has become an overarching goal and key priority of the United Nations system. This trend has also had an impact on the work of CEB during the reporting period.

4. The United Nations system has been called upon by Member States to ensure inter-agency coherence and participation, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, during the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as well as the Conference itself. In successive sessions, CEB reflected on system-wide contributions to the preparations for the Conference and, in this context, considered elements of the broader global development agenda, including key dimensions of a greener, fairer and more sustainable globalization. Through its subsidiary machinery, CEB also addressed major management and administrative issues with a view to improving the coordination and compatibility of administrative processes across organizations of the United Nations system. In support of operational activities, a top priority of the United Nations system continues to be focused on supporting country efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, including in countries in crisis and in transition. Particular emphasis also continued to be given to the simplification and harmonization of business practices, strengthening leadership and improving knowledge management. In addition, CEB has also taken further steps in enhancing coherence and coordination among its subsidiary machinery by improving information exchanges, enhancing thematic collaboration and deepening joint programmatic activities.

5. During the reporting period, CEB welcomed the following new members: Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; José

Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Koji Sekimizu, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization; and Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the Word Food Programme.

II. Programme issues

A. Strengthening United Nations system support for sustainable development

6. Supporting Member States in their efforts to advance economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability in an integrated manner has been of paramount concern for CEB and is a centrepiece of the Secretary-General's five-year action agenda. In response to General Assembly resolution 65/152, CEB, under the aegis of its High-level Committee on Programmes, developed several joint contributions of the United Nations system to the preparatory process of the Conference on Sustainable Development aimed at advancing coherence and synergies within the United Nations system on sustainable development.

1. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

7. Member States have stated repeatedly that sustainable development was a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities and have called upon the United Nations system to take action to ensure the effective implementation of and follow-up to the sustainable development commitments, programmes and time-bound targets. At its fall 2011 session and spring 2012 session, CEB underscored that sustainable development, with its interlinked economic, social and environmental pillars, remained a top priority for the United Nations system. The Board also recognized that the Conference presented a unique opportunity to reach agreement on a framework for action that puts the world on a more sustainable development pathway. The Board further acknowledged that the challenges of sustainable development require a coordinated approach by the United Nations system in collaboration with other stakeholders in order to find joint innovative and lasting solutions in support of countries' efforts to address economic, social and environmental issues in an integrated manner.

8. CEB supported intergovernmental preparations for the Conference by issuing a joint preambular statement in November 2011 as input to the zero draft of the outcome document for the Conference. That text recognized that the shift to sustainable development presented challenges and opportunities and that the United Nations system was well equipped to assist Member States in the formulation and implementation of enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for sustainable development. The statement further signalled the collective readiness of the organizations of the United Nations system to "support the world's nations and peoples to make sustainable development a reality" (http://www.unsceb.org/ceb/press/20111029_CEB_RIO_COMMON_STATEMENT_FINAL.pdf).

9. At its spring 2012 session, CEB endorsed a second joint statement to be issued to the Conference itself as an appeal to the international community to take decisive action in support of a forward-looking and robust framework for sustainable development which would significantly improve human well-being, social and intergenerational equity, and environmental sustainability. The statement sought to

provide impetus for a political agreement on the steps needed to more rigorously and systematically integrate the three pillars of sustainable development into decision-making and actions by all stakeholders (http://www.unsceb.org/ceb/press/CEBRioStatementFINAL.pdf).

2. Climate change

10. Climate change remains a major concern for Member States and the United Nations system. The United Nations Secretary-General also identified climate change as a priority area in his five-year action agenda. The Board continued to support system-wide efforts in this area by focusing on the need for continued and enhanced inter-agency collaboration and coherence. To this end, CEB addressed climate change in its fall 2011 and spring 2012 sessions.

11. Sharing information on and lessons learned from actions undertaken by the United Nations system in support of Member States' efforts in the implementation of climate change commitments was an important activity pursued by CEB in 2011. At the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Durban, South Africa, in November and December 2011, the Secretary-General hosted a high-level CEB event highlighting the topic of "The United Nations System Delivering as One on Climate Change: Helping Countries to Implement the Cancun Agreements". The event brought together the Secretary-General and several executive heads of United Nations organizations in a dialogue with ministers and high-level representatives of parties to demonstrate how joint activities of the United Nations system supported global, regional and national level efforts to address climate change. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank and the World Food Programme are working together to develop an international collaborative initiative involving governments, universities, NGOs, private sector and other entities to facilitate the adoption of climate smart agricultural practices aimed at increasing productivity, improving rural livelihoods, and building resilience of rural populations.

12. Beyond coordinating system-wide participation in United Nations Climate Change Conferences, the High-level Committee on Programmes, through its Working Group on Climate Change, continued to facilitate a coherent approach and joint action of the United Nations system on climate change. The Working Group promoted programmatic coherence through information and knowledge-sharing, and concrete initiatives aimed at helping Member States in implementing the climate change agenda and streamlining climate-related issues into individual programmatic mandates of United Nations system organizations. For example, the One United Nations Training Service Platform for Climate Change (UN CC:Learn) which includes 32 partners, supports Member States, United Nations agencies and other development partners in designing and implementing results-oriented and sustainable learning to address climate change, while the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) assists developing countries in the preparation and implementation of national REDD+ strategies. As a result of a more coherent approach and a growing number of joint initiatives, United Nations support of global, regional and national climate action has been strengthened.

13. CEB extended the mandate of the Working Group on Climate Change in order to further strengthen strategic, programmatic and operational coherence of the United Nations system on climate change. The Working Group will continue to enhance collaboration and joint initiatives among its members, advance a comprehensive approach at the global level to address interconnected multi-sectoral issues related to climate change action, and identify synergies, thus maximizing impact for the global community from the implementation of intergovernmental mandates by United Nations system entities.

3. UN-Oceans, UN-Water, UN-Energy

14. Through its thematic inter-agency networks, UN-Oceans, UN-Water and UN-Energy, CEB addressed key sectoral concerns of sustainable development at its fall 2011 session and spring 2012 session.

15. Oceans play a critical role within the overall framework for sustainable development, and the need to address issues related to oceans is recognized within the process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as well as in the five-year action agenda of the Secretary-General. CEB addressed the issue of oceans at its spring 2012 session with a view to strengthening inter-agency collaboration in support of the oceans and the people who depend on them, within the provisions of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. In addition, UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations system, provided substantive contributions to the preparatory process of the Conference. Contributions included the preparation of two signature inter-agency publications, "Blueprint for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability" and "Green Economy in a Blue World", the provision of support to the "Friends of the Oceans" group, and the participation in several key ocean events highlighting the interlinkages of sustainable development and oceans.

16. Water is a key element for sustainable development and is closely linked to a number of global development challenges, including food, health, energy, poverty eradication and peace and security. Member States have acknowledged that the United Nations system has an important role to play in supporting countries to achieve water-related goals and to meet emerging challenges by promoting cooperation at all levels. During the reporting period, UN-Water launched a number of flagship reports as inter-agency contributions to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, including the fourth edition of the World Water Development Report, the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water, and the progress report of the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund. UN-Water has also strengthened its role and capacity for engagement in global policy dialogues, advocacy and communications and has taken an active role in advocating for universal coverage of water supply and sanitation services and improved water resources and wastewater management.

17. Energy has emerged as a critical issue on the global sustainable development agenda, with Member States increasingly recognizing the central importance of energy to poverty eradication and human development. UN-Energy, which is a functional network of the CEB High-level Committee on Programmes aimed at strengthening coordination and coherence among United Nations system organizations dealing with energy-related issues, actively supported the Sustainable

Energy for All initiative. UN-Energy contributed to the development of an overarching sustainable energy development goal and clean energy-related targets for consideration at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Prospectively, UN-Energy, UN-Oceans and UN-Water will more systematically harness synergies and complementarities in the light of the strong linkages among issues related to water, oceans and energy, including through enhanced sharing of knowledge and information.

B. Accelerating the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues into the work of United Nations system organizations

18. CEB addressed the issue of mainstreaming cross-cutting issues into the work of its member organizations by developing concrete tools, instruments and processes with regard to gender mainstreaming, human rights and disaster risk reduction, in support of intergovernmental decisions calling for coordinated system-wide actions in those areas.

1. Gender equality and the empowerment of women

19. The entities of the United Nations system individually and collectively made significant progress towards mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women into the normative and operational work of the United Nations. In response to Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2, CEB endorsed in October 2006 the United Nations system policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women as a means to accelerate gender mainstreaming within the policies and programmes of the United Nations system. To operationalize the Board's policy, a United Nations system-wide action plan has been developed to promote a common understanding, enhance system-wide coherence, and advance a progressive approach to gender mainstreaming. At its spring 2012 session, CEB reviewed the action plan paving the way for its implementation throughout the United Nations system.

20. The action plan, which includes a set of 15 common system-wide performance indicators, constitutes a comprehensive framework for reporting and accountability that is expected to markedly advance gender equality and the empowerment of women by systematically mainstreaming a gender perspective into the policies and programmes of the United Nations system. The system-wide action plan was prepared on the basis of an extensive inter-agency consultation process under the leadership of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

2. Human rights

21. CEB addressed the issue of human rights at its fall 2011 session and, subsequently, took concrete steps to strengthen the integration of human rights into its work and that of its subsidiary bodies at its spring 2012 session. In addition to peace and security and economic and social progress, human rights is one of the three pillars and core areas of work of the Organization as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The 2005 World Summit and all major conferences since had reaffirmed the interlinkages among the three pillars and supported further integration of human rights into the work of the United Nations system. In its

resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review on operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the General Assembly further underscored the importance of human rights for United Nations operational activities for development.

22. While good progress towards integrating human rights into the work of the United Nations system has been achieved, CEB recognized that there was a need for more regular, policy-level discussions on human rights to further strengthen policy coherence and integrity across the United Nations system, based on the norms and standards of the Organization. CEB supported a more systematic consideration of human rights issues in its work to advance policy coherence and inter-agency coordination by regularly including human rights themes in the deliberations of its High-level Committee on Programmes. The United Nations Development Group is working to strengthen coordinated United Nations responses to requests from Member States for support in their efforts to fulfil international human rights commitments. It aims to strengthen system-wide policy coherence and collaboration towards the integration of relevant human rights principles and international standards into United Nations operational activities for development.

3. Disaster risk reduction

23. According to the 2011 Global Assessment Report issued by the United Nations inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, the risk of disaster losses is increasing globally, with least developed countries and small island developing States suffering the most from disasters. Member States have called upon the entire United Nations system to make every effort to accelerate the full integration and mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in all its programmes and activities. In this regard, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Countries and Communities to Disasters provides a comprehensive international agenda for action in disaster risk reduction at all levels.

24. Building on efforts initiated at its spring 2011 session and ongoing work by the High-level Committee on Programmes, CEB deepened system-wide capacity and coordination to mainstream disaster risk reduction in programmes and operational activities of United Nations system organizations in support of the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action. At the request of CEB and under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction reviewed the status of mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into policies, planning and programming of United Nations system organizations.

25. Disaster risk reduction was widely supported within the United Nations system, and a considerable number of concrete efforts to enhance coherence and integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations are already being implemented at the global and regional levels. In furtherance of relevant mandates, CEB requested the United Nations inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, in coordination with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, to expand and strengthen United Nations system efforts to mainstream disaster risk reduction into policies and operational activities by preparing a system-wide action plan on disaster risk reduction to ensure the highest possible degree of coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations system in the field of disaster risk reduction, and to more systematically and strategically address core issues and gaps in disaster risk reduction.

C. Strengthening United Nation coordination for sustainable development challenges ahead

26. In follow-up to decisions taken by the General Assembly inviting organizations of the United Nations system to increase their efforts in strengthening coordination and coherence when providing input to a number of forthcoming intergovernmental meetings and conferences, CEB addressed the issue of joint contributions by the United Nations system organizations to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be held by the General Assembly in 2013, and the extension of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014.

1. Population issues

27. Population dynamics and demographic transformations are among the key challenges facing the international community and have major implications for sustainable development, in particular with regard to food security, use of natural resources and consumption of energy. During the reporting period, the United Nations system has increased its efforts to be more effective in advocating for and assisting countries in addressing challenges arising from changing population patterns. In response to General Assembly resolution 65/234 on the extension of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014, CEB addressed the issue of population dynamics and acknowledged that the recent passage of the 7 billion world population milestone provided impetus to reflect on the impact of demographic change on sustainable development. The Board asserted that addressing the variety of population challenges requires a joint effort by all stakeholders. Under the leadership of the United Nations Population Fund and in collaboration with organizations of the United Nations system, CEB initiated the development of a joint report that would address population dynamics from a United Nations system perspective and provide guidance for a coordinated response to population realities and anticipated trends.

2. International migration and development

28. Attention to international migration at the global, regional and national levels has been increasing since the holding in 2006 by the General Assembly of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. In response to General Assembly resolutions 63/225 and 65/170 on the issue of international migration and development, which encouraged the adoption of a balanced, coherent and comprehensive approach to international migration and development and invited relevant organizations of the United Nations system to provide input to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be held by the General Assembly in 2013, CEB took up the issue at its spring 2012 session. To ensure system-wide coherence and coordination in submitting input to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the United Nations Population Fund and the International Organization for Migration, in collaboration with the Global Migration Group, would lead an inter-agency consultation process with a view to preparing an analysis of opportunities and challenges of international migration, as well as draft outcomes and recommendations on migration as an input to the preparatory process for the High-level Dialogue.

III. United Nations development system working together

A. Supporting countries in accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

1. Follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals Summit and preparations for the post-2015 framework

29. The 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals resulted in a global action agenda for reaching the Goals by 2015, and recommitted all actors to accelerate progress towards that end. The meeting's outcome document provided the strategic guidance for the work of the United Nations system in supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

30. On behalf of CEB, the United Nations Development Group continues to support country efforts to accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through implementation of the Acceleration Framework and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. Recent data indicates that 98 per cent of the frameworks are centred on the Millennium Development Goals. The Acceleration Framework supports the design and implementation of national strategies aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Framework helps Governments identify bottlenecks that are preventing progress in achieving the Goals, as well as tested and reliable solutions that can help to overcome such impediments. The Framework builds upon existing national efforts and generates country-specific acceleration plans, which bring Governments and other partners together around the most critical development priorities for that country.

31. Prospectively, the United Nations Development Group will provide support to countries in their preparations for the 2013 review by the General Assembly of Millennium Development Goal progress. To support the Secretary-General in preparing a post-2015 development framework, the United Nations Development Group is also supporting consultation processes in about 50 countries on the post-2015 development agenda and nine regional thematic consultations. The country consultations are aimed at complementing the formal consultations.

2. United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks

32. General Assembly resolution 62/208 called on the United Nations system to strengthen interdepartmental and inter-agency coordination to ensure an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach to assistance at the country level. Towards this end, the United Nations Development Group continued to provide dedicated support to country preparations of United Nations Assistance Development Frameworks during the reporting period.

33. The United Nations Development Group made a significant investment to build the capacity of United Nations country teams in support of country efforts to design and implement high-quality United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. Strategic planning retreats, which set the strategic base for the frameworks, were organized, bringing together government, civil society and the United Nations country teams to review the major national development challenges, identify the comparative advantage of the United Nations country team and high-priority areas to be translated into tangible framework outcomes. Governments have reported that 94 per cent of all United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks

have ensured alignment with their national strategic priorities. Recent survey data from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat shows that 98 per cent of the frameworks are centred around the Millennium Development Goals. Data also shows that United Nations country teams have strengthened their collaboration at the policy and programme level.

3. Management and accountability system

34. During the reporting period, the United Nations Development Group commissioned an independent review of the implementation of the management and accountability system in order to identify ways to improve, strengthen and accelerate its implementation. The independent review recognized that much progress had been made and noted a marked improvement in the culture of working and delivering results together. An institutional architecture has been put in place to further support coordination of the United Nations development system at the country level, including the United Nations Development Group Advisory Group, the regional United Nations Development Group teams and the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office. Full implementation of the management and accountability system is an important priority moving forward.

4. Crisis, post-crisis and transition countries

35. Since the adoption of the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review, substantial progress has been made in developing the necessary policy frameworks to strengthen the effectiveness of United Nations operations in support of countries in transition from relief to development. Those frameworks, which include policy on the integration of efforts, are set out in the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881-S/2009/304).

36. Eighteen integrated strategic frameworks are now in place to foster coherence among United Nations actors on the ground towards agreed and common strategic goals. The United Nations Development Group also continued to enhance support to strengthen the strategic planning capacity of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. This enhanced support contributed towards: (a) ensuring that United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and integrated strategic frameworks are based on national priorities, focused and integrating the work of peacekeeping and special political missions and United Nations country teams; (b) better programming, with an increasing number of joint programmes being undertaken with the peacekeeping and special political missions; and (c) better services provided to the United Nations country team and Governments.

37. During the reporting period, the United Nations Development Group continued its support to the implementation of post-conflict needs assessments as called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/208, including by taking steps to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system, the World Bank, the European Union and multilateral development banks on the post-conflict needs assessment methodology through training of experienced practitioners to be deployed to support countries, at their request.

IV. Management issues

A. Harmonization and simplification of business practices

38. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, the United Nations system is encouraged to continue its efforts to harmonize and simplify business practices through common strategies and operations with a view to generate cost savings and reduce administrative and procedural burdens. The harmonization and simplification of business practices continued to be a key priority of the Board during the reporting period. Work on harmonization is predominantly carried out through the CEB High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group and their functional networks, and limited to functions and processes whose responsibility rests within the purview of Executive Heads.

39. In the course of the reporting period the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group have worked on multiple tracks, with three major objectives: to improve organizations' business models and make their management and administrative processes more coherent and compatible across the United Nations system; to generate cost efficiencies while improving the quality of delivery; and to pursue the behavioural and cultural changes that are needed to modernize the work environment.

40. One key aspect of the work of the CEB secretariat on the agendas of the High-level Committee on Management and of the United Nations Development Group has been to identify and replicate best practices, successful experiences and lessons learned. In this context, the High-level Committee on Management completed a comprehensive compilation and analysis of measures put in place across the United Nations system aimed at improving efficiency and control costs, as well as challenges faced. The results of this work were provided as a system-wide contribution to the discussion on efficiency undertaken by the United Nations Secretary-General under the auspices of the Deputy Secretary-General.

41. The work programme of CEB on harmonization and simplification is also supported by the Harmonization of Business Practices Plan of Action of the High-level Committee on Management, which received funding of about $10.5 million from the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. To date, close to $4.6 million has been allocated to projects that support harmonization and simplification initiatives in the areas of human resources, procurement, finance and budget, information and communications technology, and training and knowledge transfer. Additional projects amounting to about $2 million are currently being developed.

1. Harmonization and simplification of business practice at the country level

42. CEB, in particular through its plan of action for the harmonization of business practices, has increased its focus on country level harmonization in response to findings of the high-level joint mission conducted in 2010 by the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management to identify bottlenecks in business practices at the country level. The annual report of CEB for 2010/11 (E/2011/104) provided information on the outcome of the mission.

43. In order to support field implementation, collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College is continuing. In response to the recommendation for an

integrated approach to programme and operations at the country level, over 300 programme and operations staff from the 2011 United Nations Development Assistance Framework roll-out countries were trained on how to integrate programming, business operations and joint funding — an initiative jointly funded by the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group. The Committee and the Development Group are now working with the Staff College to identify ways to continue to support the integration of programmes and business operations in light of changes in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework support structure. In addition, the United Nations Development Group has developed and implemented a roster system managing technical support and resources in various operational fields in support of country-level harmonization and simplification efforts. The roster system is developed on the basis of training courses, which have been developed jointly by the High-level Committee on Management, the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Staff College.

44. In the area of joint procurement, a joint High-level Committee on Management/United Nations Development Group global survey was completed, which showed a 12.5 per cent average monetary saving on total procurement value of goods/services jointly procured at the country level as well as a range of non-monetary benefits. The survey also included details on challenges and bottlenecks experienced at the country level in the area of harmonization and simplification. In addition, the Procurement Network of the High-level Committee on Management is implementing a project to improve collaboration in procurement in the field under the leadership of the United Nations Children's Fund. The project is focused on enhancing inter-agency cooperation in the area of procurement by identifying necessary adjustments to organization-specific guidance and to inter-agency guidelines on procurement. Implementation of the project, which is funded through the plan of action for the harmonization of business practices and is carried out in coordination with the United Nations Development Group, includes the creation of tools for operations management teams and training materials for inclusion in organizations' training programmes.

45. With regard to inter-agency coordination in the area of human resources, the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management is supporting a project, also funded through the plan of action, which is aimed at harmonizing recruitment and selection processes, and the corresponding legal frameworks, for General Service and National Officer positions at the country level. This was identified as one of the many obstacles to working in a Delivering as One mode by the joint mission of the High-level Committee on Management and United Nations Development Group undertaken in 2010. The project builds on an early review and comparison in the context of the plan of action for the harmonization of business practices, of human resources practices, policies and procedures in the United Nations system, with specific focus on those that pertain to field staff. The initiative has the strong support of the staff federations, and will be led by the United Nations Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization, with pilot projects in Uruguay and Viet Nam.

46. In the area of information and communications technology, a proposal by the inter-agency Information and Communications Technology Network, under the leadership of the World Food Programme, is aimed at consolidating and harmonizing data communications services in country offices, building on the

experiences of similar projects in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania. Once fully implemented, the project will improve efficiencies by allowing agencies to share access to global communications services.

47. In the area of common services, the United Nations Development Group finalized the business operations strategy guidelines and a suite of supporting tools that promote the development of common business operations at the country level and provide guidance to United Nations country teams. In addition, 60 staff members of the United Nations system organizations were trained in common services methodology. In the area of common premises, support was provided to 18 Governments and United Nations country teams with the development of common premises.

48. In the area of joint funding approaches, the United Nations Development Group also supported the application of common budgetary frameworks and carried out work concerning the establishment of Multi-Donor Trust Funds and One Funds, establishment of a clear fiduciary management oversight system, and strengthening country-level capacity in making strategic decisions with regard to funding United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. The United Nations Development Group also launched an independent global assessment aimed at identifying results of the harmonized approach to cash transfers programme and enhancing the quality and efficiency of the implementation of the harmonized approach. The global assessment reported that 19 out of 140 countries to be compliant with the harmonized approach. For 2012, the United Nations Development Group is aiming to undertake revisions of the harmonized approach to cash transfers framework which are expected to lead to a lowering of the costs of implementation and will address recommendations made in the report.

2. Harmonization and simplification of business practices at the global level

49. As the work of the High-level Committee in Management more broadly focuses on corporate management policies, the Committee, through its plan of action for the harmonization of business practices, is funding several initiatives with global impact.

50. The most advanced project of this kind, co-led by the World Health Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, is in the area of financial management and aims at putting in place common and/or harmonized treasury services. As reported in the annual overview report of CEB for 2010/11 (E/2011/104), a feasibility study was carried out by the Committee's Finance and Budget Network. The study identified several areas where greater inter-agency collaboration could lead to savings and efficiency gains within existing rules and regulations. Those areas include banking services, payments, foreign exchange transactions, risk management and investments. The potential for efficiency gains and reduction in costs are significant and a detailed picture of the financial impact of the proposed collaboration is expected to be available by the end of 2012.

51. In response to General Assembly resolution 64/289, the CEB secretariat, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has continued its work on the development of a United Nations system-wide financial statistics database and reporting system. That project, which is on target for completion by June 2012 and is also funded by the plan of action for the harmonization of business practices, is intended to simplify, improve and modernize the collection and reporting of system-wide financial statistics.

52. The Committee's Procurement Network has been particularly active in 2011 and 2012. A current priority for the Network is the incorporation of the model policy framework for vendor eligibility into United Nations system organizations' internal processes. The framework allows for the introduction of a common decision mechanism for dealing with suspect vendors and responds to the need for transparency, accountability and effectiveness in procurement. The Network is also continuing its focus on collaborative procurement. Joint work in the areas of freight forwarding and warehousing and freight insurance has been completed. In addition, a collaborative inter-agency procurement initiative on vehicles has been launched under the leadership of the United Nations Development Programme. These collaborative initiatives have the potential to reach considerable annual cost reductions, compared to previous contracts. The Network is also carrying out a study led by the International Atomic Energy Agency on spending trends in the United Nations system, in order to identify additional areas where collaborative procurement might lead to efficiency gains for the system.

53. In response to calls from Member States for increasing participation of developing countries and economies in transition in the procurement process of the United Nations, the Procurement Network is continuing its work on the United Nations Global Marketplace, on professional development of procurement professionals and on supplier access. Moving forward, the Network is emphasizing the importance of simplifying access to United Nations procurement. To achieve this objective, the Network is looking to simplify vendor registration which will enhance access to procurement processes for new vendors.

54. CEB, through its Human Resources Network, held a preliminary debate on the issue of personnel working for United Nations common system organizations on non-staff contracts. In order to accelerate progress in ensuring comprehensive, sensitive, coordinated and consistent support to staff and, where appropriate, other civilian personnel affected by critical incidents in the line of duty, as well as to their families, the Committee will undertake a stock-taking exercise to identify best practices, gaps and problem areas; clarify scope; and identify and explore differences in eligibility and coverage for different categories of personnel.

55. The CEB secretariat facilitates the negotiations on the agreements between organizations of the United Nations and international associations of interpreters and translators. It ensures that the agreements which regulate the conditions of employment of short-term staff performing interpretation, translation and related functions are adhered to by all parties. The agreement with the International Association of Conference Interpreters is negotiated every five years. The agreement with the International Association of Conference Translators has not been reviewed since 1991 and is therefore currently being realigned to the current realities of the United Nations common system. In 2011-2012, negotiations with the International Association of Conference Interpreters and the International Association of Conference Translators have been ongoing with a view to reaching new agreements by 1 July 2012. Monthly net rates for interpreters and translators are calculated and published by the CEB secretariat.

56. In March 2012, the High-level Committee on Management completed its review — in consultation with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund — of the mandatory age of separation, including innovative and flexible modalities in applying the mandatory age of separation, and transmitted its report to the

International Civil Service Commission in view of the Commission's upcoming consideration of this matter. The Committee recognized that there was no pressing financial need to raise the retirement age from the perspective of the Pension Fund. The harmonization of practices and the introduction of flexible retirement programmes could instead represent areas to explore further.

57. Supporting organizations in attracting and retaining a talented and mobile workforce is a priority for CEB. In this context, the High-level Committee on Management has given priority to the development of tools to support increased mobility within and between organizations. At its spring session, the Committee endorsed the Inter-Organization Agreement Concerning the Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations Applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances. The Agreement, which came into effect on 1 January 2012, provides the first building block of a framework to foster mobility throughout the system. In view of future discussions by Member States on mobility within the United Nations, the Committee will continue its work, addressed by a working group established by the Human Resources Network, under the leadership of the United Nations Secretariat. The Network also established a working group to identify common elements of performance appraisal systems across the United Nations organizations. The CEB secretariat issued the annual report on personnel statistics in May 2012.

58. In order to improve system-wide planning and budgeting for information and communications technology, the Information Communications Technology Network initiated a project that assists organizations in analysing the cost of information and communications technology. Led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, this project will improve the ability of the United Nations system to budget and plan their investments in information and communications technology on the basis of comparative information on costs.

59. Data communications services remain at the heart of information and communications technology operations for many organizations, and the Information Communications Technology Network has initiated several projects that allow for increased harmonization across the system. One project, called the United Nations Core Gateway will, for the first time, allow for the interconnection of internal agency networks, thereby allowing for an unprecedented ability to communicate easily and efficiently across agencies. In addition, the United Nations Secretariat is leading an effort for all agencies to migrate to the latest version of the Internet Protocol. The entire global Internet will be required to adopt this protocol in the coming years, and it offers a unique opportunity t harmonize and standardize agency networks.

60. In addition, the Information Communications Technology Network continues to address the issue of cybersecurity, and during the first-ever global United Nations system conference of Chief Information Security Officers, led by the International Telecommunication Union, agreed to adopt shared standards and build common awareness training modules.

B. International Public Sector Accounting Standards

61. The United Nations system is increasingly using International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) as an instrument to improve the quality of financial

reporting, thereby increasing transparency and accountability. Twenty-four organizations of the United Nations system are now implementing IPSAS (with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS being the latest implementing organization). Thirteen organizations, with adoption dates ranging from 2012 to 2014, are currently in the process of IPSAS implementation. A list of organizations and their IPSAS implementation dates, as at 31 July 2011, is provided in annex I to the fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the adoption of IPSAS by the United Nations (A/66/379).

62. All organizations that will implement IPSAS from 2012 to 2014 have reported to be on track with their project timelines. Implementation issues common to many United Nations system organizations have been closely monitored, discussed and reported by the System-wide Task Force on Accounting Standards of the High-level Committee on Management. The adoption of IPSAS is expected to substantially enhance the level of comparability of financial statements issued by the United Nations system organizations. With 10 United Nations system organizations having successfully implemented IPSAS by 2011, there is greater empirical evidence relating to harmonization of financial reporting. During 2011 and 2012, the system-wide IPSAS team carried out a comparison analysis of the IPSAS-compliant financial statements of eight United Nations organizations. In 2012, a Working Group was established by the Task Force on Accounting Standards to analyse IPSAS benefits and identify good practices on the basis of existing experiences in IPSAS implementation by United Nations system organizations with a view of harnessing IPSAS benefits for the system-wide level.

C. Safety and security of staff

63. CEB attaches highest importance to the issue of staff safety and security. Through the High-level Committee on Management and under the leadership of the Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations Secretariat, CEB has continued to make consistent progress on issues relating to staff safety and security with the active engagement by all members of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network. As of 1 January 2011, the new security level system has been operational. This new system, together with the development of a more robust threat analysis programme, allows for the analysis and rating of threats globally by using common criteria.

64. At its fall 2011 session, the CEB High-level Committee on Management endorsed the last outstanding piece of the redesigned United Nations Security Management System, which responds to the complex and shifting security challenges faced by United Nations staff, and to the adoption of the "how to stay" in lieu of "when to leave" approach: the programme criticality framework. This new tool, which was developed after extensive consultations at headquarters and field levels, including field testing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Somalia, will help decision-making around programme presence in challenging country situations. The programme criticality framework will be rolled out in 12 pilot countries, and a consolidated progress report, including lessons learned and recommended adjustments, is expected in the beginning of 2013.

65. Progress has also been made regarding policy formulation in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network. In the course of the reporting

period, the High-level Committee on Management endorsed a series of new and updated policies on road safety, arrest and detention, close protection, hostage incident management, relations with the host country on security, and fire safety. In addition, the Department of Safety and Security and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network are currently developing a policy and guidelines for the use of private security companies. The policy will be submitted to the Committee and CEB for approval at their fall 2012 sessions.

66. Under procedures set up for the United Nations Medical Emergency Response Team which had been first endorsed by the Committee in 2004, followed by an endorsement of the medical directors plan in 2009, the Team was mobilized within 24 hours in the case of the bombing in Abuja in August 2011. The concerted response by the Critical Incident Stress Counselling Unit of the Department of Safety and Security, the medical emergency teams and the security and administrative components of the agencies, funds and programmes was recognized as a commendable example of a coordinated and effective system-wide intervention. This was owing largely to the availability of greater resources and to the lessons learned in the aftermath of earlier attacks against the United Nations in Iraq and Algeria.

V. Coordination between the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and other jointly financed bodies

67. Member States have consistently supported continuous cooperation between CEB and other jointly financed coordination bodies. In 2011, the CEB secretariat continued its increasingly active and regular interactions with those bodies, in particular with the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission. In this regard, the CEB secretariat has sought to strengthen its interactions and cooperation through the acceleration of comments on system-wide reports of the Joint Inspection Unit and the more frequent participation of the Unit and the International Civil Service Commission in the meetings of the subsidiary machinery of CEB. In addition, regular exchanges are managed with oversight bodies such as the Office for Internal Oversight Services.

68. The International Civil Service Commission is regularly invited to contribute its views on relevant issues before the High-level Committee on Management, and participates in all meetings of the Committee's Human Resources Network and in most of the activities of its task forces and working groups. Reciprocally, the CEB secretariat participates in all sessions of the Commission and is involved in many of its working groups considering issues of system-wide importance such as on mobility and hardship, standards of conduct and others. In July 2011, the Network organized a one-day retreat with members of the International Civil Service Commission to develop closer working relations and enhance collaboration. In other areas of cooperation, the CEB secretariat also produces and shares personnel statistics data, analysis, system-wide data compilation and studies with the Commission.

69. The subject of closer coordination between CEB member organizations and the Joint Inspection Unit continues to be a priority. The CEB secretariat continues to encourage member organizations, among other actions, to ensure a good information

flow between each organization and the Joint Inspection Unit as well as coordinate action on the recommendations and programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit. Concerning the programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit, while organizations of the United Nations system have always contributed to this process, the CEB secretariat also assisted the Joint Inspection Unit in the identification of relevant and useful topics that it may consider in its programme of work for 2012. In addition, CEB and its high-level committees continue to look at ways to further enhance cooperation between the Secretariat and the Joint Inspection Unit. Inspectors are regularly invited to participate in meetings of the networks of the High-level Committee on Management to exchange views during the preparation of the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, as relevant. The United Nations system welcomed the increased system-wide perspective of the work of the Joint Inspection Unit as contained in its medium-term planning and revised Strategic Framework for 2010-2019. While the Joint Inspection Unit has increased its system-wide focus with an average of eight to nine reports up from four to five, the CEB secretariat has continued to perform its activities in support of the work of the Joint Inspection Unit within existing capacities.

VI. Conclusions

70. During the reporting period, CEB, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, has made significant progress in taking effective and coordinated action on a wide range of programme, management and operational issues in support of intergovernmental mandates to ensure that the United Nations system collaborates closely on issues of system-wide concern. With respect to the mandate of CEB to support and reinforce the coordinating role of intergovernmental bodies, the Board harnessed synergies and complementarities among the organizations of the United Nations system in various areas, particularly by contributing to the preparation of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In addition, CEB supported countries in their efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and advanced coordination in the area of harmonization and simplification of business practices both at country and global levels.

71. Enhancing the transparency and accountability of CEB to Member States has been one of the Board's priorities during the reporting period. Direct and substantive dialogue between CEB and Member States was carried out by the Secretary of the Board as well as officials of the Board's secretariat. CEB also continued its cooperation with other jointly financed coordination bodies, in particular with the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission and strengthened its cooperation with those bodies on issues of common concern.

72. Looking ahead, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development is expected to have system-wide implications for the further integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development into the work of United Nations system organizations. This will require a coherent and coordinated response by the members of CEB to accelerate follow-up and implementation.

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/118, contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people, needs still unmet and proposals for responding to them. This report describes efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions. The reporting period is from May 2011 to April 2012. During that period the Palestinian Authority completed its two-year State-building programme. The United Nations enhanced its support to those efforts through its Medium-Term Response Plan. The United Nations is currently executing $1.2 billion of works under that plan and is seeking an additional $1.7 billion for planned works. This complements the humanitarian programming outlined in the 2012 Consolidated Appeal of $416.7 million, of which 38 per cent has been funded as of April 2012.

* A/67/50.
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Despite some diplomatic progress between the Israelis and Palestinians in early 2012, the parties have been unable to resume negotiations. The absence of a political horizon that would match progress in the Palestinian State-building agenda remains a fundamental obstacle to further progress. Settlement activity, demolitions of Palestinian property, and displacement increased in 2011. Prospects for elections and for establishing a Palestinian unity government of technocrats remained uncertain, despite limited progress in the intra-Palestinian reconciliation process.

Significant economic growth was realized over the reporting period. It was primarily led by public expenditure in the West Bank and construction in Gaza. Trade sectors of the economy were most affected by the restrictions on movement and access and low levels of investment, especially in Gaza, bringing into question the sustainability of recent growth. Unemployment and food insecurity declined, but remained high, particularly in Gaza and Area C of the West Bank.

Over the reporting period, the United Nations intensified its efforts to respond to those and other challenges, focusing particularly on the areas where the Palestinian Authority was least able to extend its services: Gaza, and Area C and East Jerusalem of the West Bank. The United Nations worked at scale on reconstruction in Gaza, having received approval for US$ 365 million of projects requiring material that needs to be approved by the Government of Israel. The Palestinian Authority-United Nations Trust Fund was used to channel US$ 22 million for the construction of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools and would serve as an appropriate channel for the United Nations recovery and development work throughout the occupied Palestinian territory.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/118, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people and of the needs still unmet, and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. Also included is a summary of key political developments and challenges relevant to the reporting period, as the international community continued to work to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, as well as to support the State-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority and negotiations between the parties. The reporting period is from May 2011 to April 2012.

2. Information on the living and socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people is provided in several reports prepared by other United Nations agencies, in particular: (a) the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (to be issued); and (b) the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/66/13).

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several documents. The Consolidated Appeals Process for 2012, with a narrower focus than in previous years, sought $417 million to address the humanitarian needs by enhancing the protective environment and tackling food insecurity of the most vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip, Area C, including the seam zones, and East Jerusalem. The United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan was revised in 2011, bringing it more closely in line with the Palestinian National Development Plan and strengthening linkages with the Consolidated Appeal. UNRWA programme goals for the period 2010-2015 were reflected in the Agency's medium-term strategy, which was estimated at $675 million for 2010-2011, excluding emergency relief interventions. The Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 outlined priority development needs in the amount of $4 billion.

4. Throughout the year, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority continued its efforts to support the peace process and to ensure effective coordination among the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel. The Office also continued to document the economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, and develop policies and programmes to improve them.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

5. The current framework for negotiations was provided by the Middle East Quartet in its statement of 23 September 2011. The Quartet called on both sides to

resume negotiations, submit proposals on territory and security within three months, and make "substantial progress" on those two issues within six months. After 15 months without direct talks, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held several meetings, starting on 3 January 2012 in Amman under the auspices of King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh of Jordan. On 17 April, a senior Palestinian delegation met with the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, in Jerusalem to deliver a letter from the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and a joint statement following the meeting noted the commitment of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to achieving peace. The United Nations has also continuously urged both sides to avoid provocations that would be detrimental to the prospects for peace.

6. On 23 September 2011, citing lack of movement in negotiations and continued Israeli settlement activity, President Abbas submitted to the Secretary-General an application for United Nations membership. The Secretary-General immediately transmitted the application to the Security Council. It remains under the consideration of the Security Council. On 31 October 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) considered favourably a similar application and granted membership in the organization. Those steps were viewed negatively by Israel, and the Government of Israel withheld the Palestinian Authority's tax revenue for several weeks. UNESCO funding has also been affected because of the withholding of the United States contribution.

7. The situation in Gaza remains fragile and of serious concern for the United Nations. The de facto Hamas authority remains in control of the Gaza Strip. The lifting of the closure in the context of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) continues to be a fundamental objective of the United Nations.

8. The fragility of the calm in Gaza and southern Israel was repeatedly demonstrated by escalations in October and December 2011, with the largest escalation since operation "Cast Lead" taking place in March 2012. Militant groups continued indiscriminate firing of rockets, mortars and other munitions during those rounds of violence.

9. Israeli Sergeant First Class Gilad Shalit, held in Gaza without access since 25 June 2006, was released by Hamas on 18 October 2011, as part of an exchange agreement that included 1,027 Palestinian prisoners. UNSCO actively supported channels of dialogue throughout that period.

10. The continued Palestinian divide represents an important challenge. Palestinian factions concluded a reconciliation accord on 4 May in Cairo, which was brokered by Egypt. A follow-up agreement was reached in Doha on 6 February 2012 between President Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Meshal that would have facilitated the formation of a transitional government and the holding of elections. Unfortunately, the process of reconciliation has not substantially advanced since the signing of those agreements.

11. While Palestinian State-building has continued to make considerable progress, this achievement is at increased risk. Progress was realized in improving the capacity of Palestinian institutions, inter alia of the security forces, which continued to provide law and order in Palestinian cities under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Palestinian institutions also continued to provide basic services, including addressing the needs of the most vulnerable members of Palestinian

society. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met on 21 March 2012 in Brussels. While the Committee reconfirmed the institutional readiness of the Palestinian Authority to assume the functions required of a future State, the primary concern of all members of the Committee was the dire financial situation of the Palestinian Authority. Committee members called upon donors to meet the $1.1 billion financing requirement of the Palestinian Authority for 2012.

12. Israeli authorities have continued to advance settlement construction in the West Bank, especially in East Jerusalem. Seizure of land for settlement building and expansion has resulted in the further shrinking of space available for Palestinians to sustain their livelihoods and develop adequate housing, basic infrastructure, services and productive capacity for economic growth. Settler violence continues to be a serious concern and remains a source of friction in the West Bank. Israeli civilians have also been affected by violence in the West Bank. Settlement activity is illegal under international law, runs counter to Israel's commitments under the road map, and is not recognized by the international community. In this regard, the Quartet has repeatedly urged the parties to refrain from actions that prejudge the outcome of negotiations.

13. Despite initial movement in January, the inability of the parties to resume negotiations is deeply concerning. The absence of a political horizon that would match progress in the Palestinian State-building agenda remains the fundamental impediment to realizing a more meaningful change for Palestinians on the ground. Political progress is vital for securing a negotiated two-State solution which ends the occupation, ends the conflict and addresses all core issues.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

14. The Government of President Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad continued to implement key economic and fiscal reforms. Net lending in 2011 was 43 per cent lower than in 2010.[1] Efforts to improve the collection of utility bills and other revenues have been strengthened.

15. Real growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at 10.7 per cent for 2011. Real GDP per capita was $1,614 in 2011 (in constant 2004 United States dollars), an increase of 7 per cent from 2010.[2] Unemployment rates dropped overall to 21 per cent in 2011, compared to 24 per cent in 2010. Growth and unemployment rates varied during the year, and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, unemployment remained at 17 per cent, while it declined from 38 per cent in 2010 to 29 per cent in the Gaza Strip.[2]

16. There has been relatively little expansion of the tradable sectors of the economy, which are the most affected by the restrictions on movement and access, bringing into question the sustainability of recent growth. Growth has been led by public expenditure in the West Bank and by the construction sector in Gaza.

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[1] See World Bank, "Stagnation or Revival? Palestinian Economic Prospects", Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (21 March 2012).

[2] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

17. Concerns about the long-term prospects of the Palestinian economy continued to include the need for recovery of the private sector, reduction of dependency on foreign aid and public expenditure, diversification of the economy, access to natural resources and removal of access restrictions on people and goods.

Humanitarian and socioeconomic developments

18. During the reporting period,[3] 99 Palestinians were killed (91 in Gaza, including 56 militants; 8 in the West Bank; overall, nine children and one woman) and 2,123 injured (471 in Gaza, including 58 militants; 1,652 in the West Bank; overall, 308 children and 119 women) by Israeli security forces, compared to 112 fatalities and 1,270 injuries during the previous period. In the West Bank, growing settler violence towards Palestinians resulted in one fatality, 145 injuries (including 24 women and 35 children), and damage to property. Four Israelis were killed, and 67 injured. Militants launched 889 rockets and mortar shells towards Israel, as compared with 828 in the previous period.

19. At the end of March 2012, 203 Palestinian children were in Israeli detention for alleged security violations.

20. Demolitions of housing and livelihood assets nearly doubled to 643 structures demolished in the reporting period, following a fourfold increase in the previous reporting period. As a result, 1,160 people were displaced, more than half of them children. In the Gaza Strip, household vulnerability to food insecurity was also aggravated by lack of access to agricultural land in the Buffer Zone and, for fishermen, restrictive limits to Gaza's fishing waters.

21. The level of food insecurity in the occupied Palestinian territory decreased from 33 per cent in 2010 to 27 per cent in 2011, with 44 per cent in Gaza and 17 per cent in Areas A and B of the West Bank. Food insecurity levels in Area C were 24 per cent.[4] Further reductions in poverty and improved food security can be achieved only with sustainable, inclusive economic growth and job creation, which require further easing of movement and access restrictions that still hinder private sector activity.[5]

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

22. Access to and movement of Palestinians between most Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, deteriorated during the reporting period. As of the drafting of this report, there were approximately 530 closure obstacles inside the West Bank, compared to 500 at the end of April 2011. Ongoing restrictions on Palestinian access to land, social services and economic opportunities in East Jerusalem and Area C hinder development efforts, resulting in deteriorating living conditions and increased vulnerability.

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[3] Figures cover the period from 1 May 2011 to 30 April 2012. Data collected by the United Nations.

[4] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, UNRWA and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "2011 Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey Report" (April 2012).

[5] See UNSCO, "Palestinian State-building: an achievement at increased risk". Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (March 2012).

23. In Gaza, the additional restrictions on land and sea access put in place by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the wake of operation "Cast Lead" remained in place. The land along the barrier with Israel remained inaccessible to Gazans, with Israel citing security concerns to deny almost all access within 1,000 to 1,500 metres of the barrier. Thirty-five per cent of Gaza's agricultural land and 85 per cent of the maritime space remained restricted, affecting 178,000 people.

24. United Nations operations encountered numerous restrictions and delays in reaching communities in the West Bank, impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees and residents. Access and operational space for staff of humanitarian agencies remained restricted. From May 2011 to March 2012, there were 501 reported incidents of delayed or denied access of United Nations staff at Israeli checkpoints. The majority of those incidents occurred as United Nations staff crossed the barrier on the Jerusalem periphery.

Barrier

25. Construction of the barrier continued in the north-west of the Bethlehem Governorate. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UNRoD), established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/17, continued its outreach and claim intake activities. More than 26,000 claims and over 250,000 supporting documents were collected. Claim intake activities in the Tubas, Jenin and Tulkarm Governorates were completed and the work is nearly finalized in the Qalqiliya Governorate as of the drafting of this report. The team of claim intakers of UNRoD has commenced its work in the Salfit Governorate.

III. United Nations response

26. The United Nations system provided substantial support in the framework of the Palestinian Authority National Development Plan and numerous multi-year national sector strategies. The United Nations extensive humanitarian programmes continued to provide essential assistance to Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, despite significant financial constraints.

A. Human and social development

27. The United Nations coordinated and delivered humanitarian assistance, including food assistance, to over 1 million people; water and sanitation assistance to over 1.5 million; and health and nutrition services to nearly 2.5 million people in the occupied Palestinian territory. The United Nations also continued to support the Palestinian Authority's State-building agenda and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in the occupied Palestinian territory through the United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan. The United Nations is engaged in over $2.8 billion of ongoing and planned development programmes, of which $1.1 billion is funded as of April 2012.

Education

28. The United Nations provided extensive support in the area of education, from direct service provision to infrastructure and policy support. UNRWA provided free school education to over 270,000 students in 341 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and the West Bank. Two thirds of those schools operated on a double-shift system, including 94 per cent of UNRWA schools in Gaza, where even that measure proved insufficient to accommodate the student population. In 2010 and 2011, UNRWA created "rotating classes" in order to absorb student growth. It provided a remedial summer learning programme for over 40,000 students, 88 per cent of whom passed the examinations following the summer programme. The Palestinian Authority-United Nations Trust Fund provided $22 million for the construction of UNRWA schools in Gaza.

29. The United Nations continued to provide extensive opportunities for vocational and non-formal education. UNRWA provided 1,923 youths from the West Bank and 1,560 from Gaza with technical vocational training. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) support to the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Education and Higher Education under the Child-Friendly School Initiative focused on remedial learning programmes to around 13,000 children (50 per cent girls) to help them to improve their Arabic language and mathematics tests. The collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNRWA continued to provide short-term training and employment opportunities for 500 Gazans in the construction sector. UNESCO supported 29 vulnerable schools in the Access Restricted Area of Gaza by providing an integrated training and community development package, combining education and protection elements.

30. Nine United Nations agencies supported the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to develop an education response package to improve capacities for the development of inclusive and child-friendly programmes from early childhood to adolescence in 42 schools of the West Bank and Gaza.

31. The two-year support of ILO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Ministries of Labour and Education continued to improve entrepreneurial skills through the roll-out and nationalization of the entrepreneurial education curriculum into vocational centres, industrial schools and technical colleges.

32. Nearly 10,000 children benefited from the Palestinian Science Festival organized across Gaza and the West Bank with UNESCO support. UNESCO also continued to provide support to the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession in developing national professional standards. UNICEF supported in-service teacher training of around 1,124 teachers (50 per cent female) on child-cantered learning. UNICEF support to the roll-out of the School Management Information System (SMIS) included cascade training for over 1,050 school staff in 297 schools.

33. The UNDP Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme continued to implement the Al Fakhoura Scholarship Programme for Gazan students. UNRWA provided approximately 200,000 children with daily school meals in Gaza. UN-Women and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education partnered to improve health and nutrition at 210 schools, benefiting 62,000 students. The

partnership also generated substantial income for women's groups and community-based organizations, which were contracted to provide food for the school canteens.

34. The World Food Programme (WFP), in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, provided locally produced date bars — partially produced in Gaza — to 75,000 children per month in the West Bank and to approximately 80,000 children per month in 145 governmental schools in the Gaza Strip. The transfer of 144 metric tons of date bars from Gaza to the West Bank for the Ministry's school feeding programme is the first transfer of goods since the start of the closure in June 2007.

35. In an event organized in September 2011, UNICEF highlighted impediments to accessing education in vulnerable Bedouin communities in Area C. UNDP, with assistance from UNSCO and the Office of the Quartet Representative, secured six construction permits for schools in Area C.

36. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools programme across the occupied Palestinian territory and cooperated with 26 new schools for the 2010-2011 school year, benefiting 780 new students.

Health

37. The United Nations continued to provide technical advice and quality assurance, as well as the direct provision of health services. UNRWA continued to be a major provider of health-care services, operating 42 health facilities in Gaza and the West Bank, and 21 health points and five mobile clinics in the West Bank, employing over 2,000 staff. The number of consultations continued to increase, reaching approximately 6.2 million for adults and adolescents in 2011, placing greater demands on UNRWA's limited medical capacity.

38. The United Nations provided key technical assistance to the Ministry of Health. The World Health Organization (WHO) has commenced a project, in partnership with the Ministry and the Norwegian Public Health Institute, to establish a National Institute of Public Health. WHO also assisted the Ministry to implement a national strategy to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases, to carry out a survey of key risk factors for non-communicable diseases and to continue to develop community-based mental health services.

39. WHO is also working with the Ministry of Health and the East Jerusalem hospitals on quality improvement in service delivery. Two governmental hospitals were selected to implement the WHO Patient Safety Friendly Hospital Initiative. A second phase of a programme is under way to improve the quality of services at the six specialized medical facilities in East Jerusalem to Joint Commission international standards. A programme in Gaza is working to improve the quality and safety of childbirth care at the seven main public hospitals. WHO has also procured medical supplies and equipment to meet essential needs in the public health system in Gaza. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported four women's health centres in Hebron, and the Jabalia and Al Buraj refugee camps in Gaza.

40. UNFPA worked with the Ministry of Health to improve women's health through a study on maternal mortality and other operational research in this area, as well as a major survey on the health profile and needs of Palestinian youth; it

supported midwife training and in-service training of health providers, and addressed quality-of-care issues, both in the West Bank and Gaza.

41. The United Nations continued to focus on programming for infants and young children. Working jointly with the Ministry of Health and the National Breastfeeding Committee, UNICEF supported the implementation of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in three hospitals in Gaza and five in the West Bank, involving sensitization workshops for 107 policymakers and 200 technical health staff. In addition, 90 health professionals in Gaza were trained on breastfeeding counselling skills and in turn reached around 13,000 mothers through health-care facilities and postnatal home visits. UNICEF also supported the finalization of the Palestinian Code of Breast Milk Substitutes.

42. UNICEF's scaling up of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses strategy led to the introduction of relevant guidelines in all Ministry of Health primary health-care clinics, enhanced knowledge of 700 health-care personnel on their use, and a slight decrease in drug use.

43. UNICEF support to the Ministry of Health's expanded immunization programme focused on areas of lowest coverage during immunization week, maintaining the high immunization rates among the most vulnerable communities. In addition, UNICEF provided the Ministry with support for all in-country vaccine procurement and logistics, and that reduced delays in vaccination.

44. UNICEF continued to support the National Nutrition Surveillance System through calibrating all measurement tools, intensifying supportive supervisory visits covering all nutrition sentinel sites and building capacities of more than 250 nutrition sentinel site staff on growth-monitoring tools, data management and the use of the Maternal and Child Health Handbook.

45. Through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, United Nations agencies are working with the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS Committee to support the development and implementation of a national strategy to address HIV prevention, treatment and care, and are also working with the Ministry on control of tuberculosis.

46. In addition to advisory and capacity-building support, the United Nations assessed and improved health infrastructure. UNFPA conducted an assessment of obstetric care facilities in Gaza, followed by a rehabilitation, re-equipment and capacity-building programme covering 5 maternity clinics and 25 primary health-care centres. UNICEF provided medical equipment and supplies to a new neonatal unit in Gaza.

Employment

47. The Technical Advisory Unit at the Ministry of Labour, supported by UNDP and ILO, continues to assist in the implementation and monitoring of effective labour market policies. ILO and the Ministry of Labour signed an agreement for the revitalization of the Palestinian Employment and Social Protection Fund as part of efforts to boost job creation, private sector development and workers' rights. The Fund will provide a wide range of financial and non-financial services, including employment services, employment guarantee schemes, enterprise development support, capacity development of small and medium-size enterprises and employment-intensive public investment.

Targeted social protection

48. UNRWA distributed 546,956 food parcels and around $6 million in supplementary cash assistance to nearly 33,320 households through its social safety net programme. In addition, UNRWA provided a family income supplement to bridge the abject poverty gap for 10,441 individuals in the West Bank and 77,199 individuals in Gaza. A total of $9,588,242 was distributed as family income supplement under the programme. Owing to funding constraints, UNRWA could distribute only 70 per cent of the value of the family income supplement in Gaza during the first round of 2012. WFP distributed food assistance (in-kind and voucher) via the Ministry of Social Affairs to 85,000 beneficiaries in the Gaza Strip and 115,000 in the West Bank as part of the Palestinian Authority Social Safety Net.

49. UN-Habitat started a $7.6 million self-help reconstruction project aimed to re-house the 100 most vulnerable non-refugee families in the Gaza Strip whose houses were completely destroyed during the December 2008-January 2009 conflict, and develop essential basic community infrastructure.

50. ILO provided technical assistance to the newly established National Wage Committee and National Committee for Social Security, designed to propose a new minimum wage and devise a basic social security scheme, respectively.

51. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) trained 40 women in home hospitality, 10 young women artists, and 67 women artisans. As of the end of 2011, 17 new women's centres had been established, with the support of UN-Women, and they provide socioeconomic services to more than 1,800 women.

Culture

52. Palestine was admitted as a full member of UNESCO in November 2011, and it subsequently ratified eight international conventions in the field of culture, which were deposited with the Director-General of UNESCO. On 8 March 2012, it also became a party to the World Heritage Convention, subsequently submitting an emergency nomination dossier for the "Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route" in Bethlehem.

53. UNESCO continued to lead a multi-agency programme on culture and development funded through the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. In May 2011, the UNESCO action undertaken in Battir for the safeguarding of millenary cultural landscapes was awarded the Melina Mercouri Prize. In April 2012, UNESCO and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency signed a significant agreement for the rehabilitation and revitalization of historic cultural heritage sites.

Food security and agriculture

54. FAO supported more than 1,500 women and their associations to achieve improved economic conditions and food security through providing agricultural inputs, skills training and marketing support. It also provided technical support to the development of the Agriculture Sector, Strategy "Shared Vision" 2011-2013 Action Plan. The Action Plan includes 299 activities and projects with a robust gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation framework with concrete indicators

measuring gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in each of the activities and projects.

55. FAO assisted over 12,900 households in the West Bank and Gaza to safeguard their assets and expand their livelihoods during the reporting period. Its interventions also focused on stimulating the potential of youth to build a vibrant, productive civil society, and on empowering women as agents of development in their homes and communities. FAO has been leading a multidisciplinary United Nations joint programme aimed at improving the quality of life and dignity of women and men in Jordan Valley communities. The programme benefits 13,140 individuals directly and 4,800 indirectly.

56. WFP supported the agriculture sector through the purchase of locally produced commodities, including 1,638 metric tons of milk, 600 metric tons of salt, and 400 metric tons of date bars. In addition, WFP used one milling factory in the West Bank and two in Gaza to produce a total of 18,346 metric tons of wheat flour.

Human rights, women, children and youth

57. The United Nations continued to mainstream human rights into its work and to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Palestinian Authority on human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) worked closely with the Palestinian Authority to strengthen its administrative capacity to be able to comply with international human rights standards, in particular the standards under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. OHCHR held workshops for Palestinian Authority officials regarding the obligations and reporting procedures under those conventions and additional workshops on monitoring human rights violations for non-governmental organization (NGO) partners.

58. The special needs of women, children and youth remained a focus for the United Nations. UNFPA supported the training of 350 women from municipalities, health centres, rehabilitation centres, NGOs and local communities on psychosocial support and mental health, gender-based violence, and human rights. UNFPA continued to support four community-based networks, through which more than 35,000 vulnerable women benefited from 2,100 outreach awareness sessions. Family Protection Units established within the Police Force in the West Bank were strengthened through the training of 250 police officers and 50 prosecutors from the Office of the Prosecutor General. More than 200 Imams and women preachers participated in child rights and protection awareness training, enabling them to advocate for child rights issues during Friday sermons and religious sessions in mosques. UN-Women also provided 64 local government authorities in 17 rural areas with training to support the mainstreaming of gender into local policies and programmes. UN-Habitat started construction of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Technical and Vocational Training Centre for Underprivileged Women in Hebron.

59. UNRWA in Gaza organized Summer Games for over 200,000 children in Gaza for six weeks. Summer Games actively promoted gender equality in Gaza by offering girls a unique and safe space within which to engage in physical activity. Based on community demand, the 2011 Summer Games also incorporated games and activities to help children to learn English. In addition, 9,000 youths were given short-term employment as activity leaders.

60. The UNRWA Special Children Special Needs Initiative continued to support students who were identified as being in need of additional assistance by providing a comprehensive assessment system: physical, psychological and socioeconomic needs and detection of learning difficulties in order for those students to be referred to appropriate treatment. Out of 14,000 students identified as having special needs by joint medical and educational teams, approximately 12,000 were provided with comprehensive medical examinations, including referrals for hospitals, speech therapy and counselling.

61. UNICEF supported the Child Protection Networks led by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which provided emergency response and psychosocial support through 16 Emergency Psychosocial Teams and 21 Family Centres, reaching over 40,000 children and around 8,000 caregivers. As a result, at least 70 per cent of children and caregivers that were reached reported feeling better able to cope with difficult events.

62. UNICEF continued to lead the inter-agency working group for the monitoring and response mechanism on grave violations against children in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009). Training-of-trainers workshops in the West Bank and Gaza resulted in strengthened monitoring, reporting and response capacity.

63. Together with NGOs and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, UNICEF continued to support 93 community-based organizations to offer quality adolescent-friendly activities. As a result, around 59,000 adolescents aged 10 to 18 participated in after-school remedial learning, recreational activities, life skills-based education, photography workshops and adolescent-led community initiatives. Almost half were girls who, without this programme, would have little or no access to activities outside the school. To ensure meeting the needs of the most vulnerable adolescents, around 75 per cent of the 93 Adolescent Friendly Spaces supported by UNICEF were located in vulnerable areas (Gaza, Area C, refugee camps and East Jerusalem). UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNFPA, initiated the process of developing National Minimum Standards for Youth and Adolescent Friendly Spaces, which will be used to improve the quality of after-school programmes and ensure that they meet the needs of adolescent girls and boys.

64. UNFPA supported a project to increase Palestinian youth participation in early recovery, improve their prospects for employment and reduce their social and economic marginalization. Until the end of the year, the project reached over 1,500 youths (49 per cent young women). A second phase is under way in 2011-2012.

65. ILO continued to support the legal clinic run by the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions in raising awareness of Palestinian workers regarding applicable laws and associated rights when working in Israel.

66. Within the framework of the joint United Nations Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, ILO assisted in the establishment of a National Committee for Women's Employment. In February 2012, the Cabinet endorsed the establishment of the Committee, which is developing a three-year plan to assist the Ministry of Labour and social partners in implementing specific measures to promote women's employment and their protection in the workplace. ILO initiated a partnership with the Islamic University of Gaza to implement a skills

training and job placement programme for unemployed women engineers in the construction sector.

Environment

67. The United Nations strengthened efforts to protect the environment. In cooperation with local communities and the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO supported the rehabilitation and greening of around 2,500 dunums of rangeland in the southern part of the West Bank during 2011. Furthermore, in the framework of its efforts to improve water availability and rationalize water resources management, FAO established around 400 community and household-level rainwater harvesting cisterns, in addition to more than 50 Grey Waste Water Treatment Units serving farming and herding families and communities in the West Bank, especially in areas prone to water scarcity. ILO is currently supporting preparatory work and running necessary research for introducing green jobs through skills upgrading and green construction in Gaza under the Green Jobs Initiative.

68. In 2011, UNRWA received funding to build a new green school that will provide educational facilities for 800 students. The building relies only on renewable and free locally available resources instead of waterworks and energy grids.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

69. The 2012 Consolidated Appeals Process for the occupied Palestinian territory seeks $417 million. It focuses on providing protection to the most vulnerable populations in Gaza, Area C and East Jerusalem and addressing food insecurity, which remains persistently high. The 2011 Consolidated Appeals Process received $305 million of the $537 million requested.

Emergency food support

70. WFP supported about 665,000 vulnerable and food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians, 351,000 in the West Bank and 313,000 in Gaza. UNRWA provided emergency food aid to about 650,000 refugees in Gaza and 186,173 individuals in the West Bank. The joint assistance programme between UNRWA and WFP for 30,000 refugee and non-refugee Bedouin herders in the West Bank yielded results — food insecurity in this group dropped from 79 per cent to 55 per cent.

71. The WFP urban voucher project in the West Bank assisted 4,735 vulnerable households during the reporting period, providing a financial stimulus to the local economy. A similar project in Gaza targeted 2,335 households. In 2011, the voucher programme in the occupied Palestinian territory injected $7,527,000 into the local economy, where nearly half the vouchers were redeemed to purchase dairy products.

Emergency income generation

72. UNRWA provided temporary work opportunities to 56,031 beneficiaries to alleviate the impact of high unemployment and poverty rates, creating more than 3.3 million days of employment. In Gaza alone, an estimated $22 million was injected into the local economy. UNFPA provided cash-for-work to over 1,000 youths for self-designed community improvement micro-initiatives. Despite the positive impact of the UNRWA Job Creation Programme, only 11 per cent of the

$57 million required for the programme in Gaza was received. The number of active contracts is less than 25 per cent of its 2010 level.

Emergency health support

73. WHO continued leading the Health and Nutrition Cluster, which provides essential humanitarian health and nutrition services to vulnerable communities in the West Bank and Gaza and builds local capacities for rapid response to new emergencies. The Cluster expanded its operations in 2011, delivering essential health and nutrition services to 2,120,077 Palestinians, or 85 per cent of the vulnerable populations identified by the Cluster.

74. In the West Bank, UNRWA mobilized the operation of five mobile clinic teams aimed at targeting approximately 13,000 patients per month, including the most vulnerable and isolated populations (mostly refugees) with difficult access to health services. UNRWA mobile health clinics include mental health counsellors and also coordinate closely with other mobile health service providers, including the Ministry of Health and NGOs.

75. To maintain sustainability of medicine provision to refugees in the West Bank, UNRWA worked with Palestinian pharmaceutical companies to successfully shorten the delivery time and maintain adequate stock for essential medicine. UNRWA also continued to help to facilitate delivery of pharmaceuticals to Gaza by aiding with the cold storage chain at the Central Pharmacy in Jerusalem for medicines procured for Gaza and delayed because of restrictive Israeli logistics, as well as making transfers of essential diabetic drugs to Gaza health clinics from Jerusalem.

76. WHO has been leading advocacy on the right to health, focusing, among other issues, on referral of patients out of Gaza for specialized care and on access to East Jerusalem hospitals. Far fewer patients had their permits to exit Gaza denied or delayed in 2011 — down from 40 per cent in 2006 to 6 per cent in 2011.

77. WHO continued to monitor shortages of drugs and disposables, fill the gaps in pharmaceutical supplies, and help to coordinate the import of medical supplies donated to Gaza. That entailed renting additional warehouses and helping to sort, register, store and deliver medical supplies, as well as disposing of expired or unusable medicines. The organization also provided spare parts and technical assistance to maintain, repair and improve existing equipment.

78. UNFPA supplied the Palestinian health system's needs for family planning commodities, and began the rehabilitation of 5 maternities and 24 primary health-care clinics in Gaza as well as related supplies, equipment and training.

Emergency water and sanitation support

79. The UNICEF-led Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Cluster identified crucially vulnerable target areas and populations through the collation of partner agency assessments on the basis of agreed indicators; established a monitoring system using the harmonized database to track response and avoid overlap; enhanced advocacy concerning crucial issues; strengthened cluster partner capacity through trainings and workshops; and facilitated fundraising for critical humanitarian needs through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) funding mechanisms.

80. UNICEF humanitarian support in the WASH Cluster focused on providing protected and reliable access to sufficient safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. UNICEF supported the upgrading of the water network at Dhahiriya town by the Palestinian Water Authority, nearly doubling water availability for a total of 2,230 households. UNICEF supported the improvement of the Rafah sewage network, benefiting at completion approximately 17,000 people and reducing groundwater pollution. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, UNICEF supported the construction and rehabilitation of WASH facilities in 78 schools, providing access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for around 56,874 students and 1,809 teachers. Hygiene promotion activities benefited 5,200 students. Tankered water was provided to 216 schools in Gaza throughout the scholastic year 2010/2011, benefiting 124,529 children.

81. UNRWA Gaza supported water and sanitation service providers operating outside refugee camps to procure sufficient quantities of fuel and other supplies. Such interventions were critical owing to persisting electricity outages. In 2011, 1.66 million litres of fuel and solar oil were distributed to municipalities and Solid Waste Management Councils and the Coastal Municipal Water Utility to ensure the continuity of water and sanitation services and treat mosquito breeding sites. UNRWA supported some NGOs providing key social services with 34,500 litres of fuel for their generators and vehicles. Based on needs, it also provided municipalities with tools and spare parts to be used for sanitation purposes. In addition, UNRWA carried out a series of urgently needed works on water and sanitation networks within camps. In the West Bank, an estimated 154,518 refugees living in 13 camps in three areas (Hebron, Jerusalem and Nablus) benefited from the sanitation physical works in 2011.

Emergency agriculture support

82. FAO led and coordinated the response to the drought and water shortage affecting the livelihood of livestock-herding communities in the West Bank. FAO distributed more than 4,500 tons of animal fodder, seeds and seedlings of drought-tolerant fodder crops and shrubs, veterinary and animal health inputs and vaccines, benefiting around 2,000 herding families.

83. FAO supported the response to a major pest outbreak on date palm fields threatening all date palm plantations in Gaza. It continued to monitor vulnerability to climatic, economic and political shocks for small-scale farmers and herders in the occupied Palestinian territory, and to strengthen collaboration with the WASH Cluster, the monitoring system and response framework designed to result in a more coordinated humanitarian approach. FAO advocated for the economic security of those vulnerable communities.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

84. The United Nations maintained support to the Palestinian Authority's efforts to improve the collection of revenue and accelerate customs clearance procedures. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) renewed an ongoing collaboration with the Palestinian Customs Authority to modernize and strengthen its existing systems. UNCTAD initiated efforts to strengthen the economic modelling and forecasting capacity of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

85. UN-Women continued to support the Ministry of Women's Affairs in implementing the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, including through the formulation of memorandums of understanding that were signed with five line ministries. UN-Women commenced a programme to improve access to justice for women victims of violence and supported the Ministry of Social Affairs in developing an accreditation policy for anti-violence shelters, which was endorsed by the Cabinet in August 2011. UNRWA participated in the development of national protocols on gender-based violence through the UNRWA Family and Child Protection Programme.

86. WFP provided support to the Ministry of Social Affairs in the development of the Palestinian Authority Social Safety Net by using a single targeting mechanism.

87. ILO continues to support the Inspection Department of the Ministry of Labour through the development and implementation of a comprehensive capacity-building programme that is based on the Labour Inspection Strategy developed in 2011. ILO also supported national efforts for the promotion of social dialogue in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to ensuring relevance and coherence of socioeconomic policies and fostering comprehensive and sustainable development. In August 2011, the Council of Ministers endorsed the establishment of a Palestinian Economic and Social Council, which ILO will serve as a technical adviser.

88. UNICEF continued to support legislation, policy and institutional advances towards a national framework enabling the strengthening of a protective environment for girls and boys. That included support to the Ministry of Social Affairs for the development of a National Child Protection Action Plan with a broad range of national and international partners. UNICEF supported broad reform at the Ministry of Social Affairs, resulting in improved harmonization and efficiency in work processes in addition to capacity-building activities for the Ministry's child protection professionals towards improved monitoring and reporting on cases of child abuse, and the efficient use of the referral protocol and electronic Child Protection database. UNICEF support to the Ministry included the finalization of the Justice for Children Law and its presentation by the Minister to the Cabinet for endorsement, together with a national planning process for the juvenile justice sector. UNICEF supported the evaluation of the non-violence in school policy pilot project for its roll-out at the national level.

89. UNFPA trained Palestinian Authority ministries on developing social indicators and on the use of data in national planning. UNFPA also supported the implementation of the first national migration survey. ILO is supporting the Ministry of Labour in the development of a revised labour law.

90. To further strengthen the National Monitoring System, UNICEF together with the respective ministries and in partnership with UNFPA, focused on the development of the national indicators on women, children and youth.

91. UNDP worked with the Palestinian Ministry of Justice to develop its institutional capacity and facilitate the improved delivery of justice. Focusing on legislative drafting, administration of justice and legal aid, the programme aimed at strengthening the Ministry's technical and operational capacity. UNDP established a working group comprised of Palestinian Government officials, civil society representatives and criminal law experts from the Arab world to provide advice on the development of a penal code. UNDP also introduced new courthouse case management software.

92. UN-Habitat provided technical support to the Ministry of Local Government in organizing the first Palestinian Urban Forum in Nabulus in March 2012, and to the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in the development of a housing strategy and policy for the occupied Palestinian territory.

D. Private sector development

93. UNRWA financed 14,600 loans valued at $22.97 million for Palestinian microenterprises and households. Thirty per cent of loans went to women and a third went to youth. The programme continued to run at a profit by maintaining an operational self-sufficiency rate of 122 per cent.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

94. Under the auspices of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, collaboration and coordination between the numerous donor and United Nations forums were strengthened during the reporting period. The Humanitarian Country Team met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. The United Nations Country Team revised its Medium-Term Response Plan to ensure greater coherence with the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013. Efforts to forge constructive partnerships between the United Nations, the Palestinian Authority and the broader aid community were strengthened. The United Nations continued the preparation of reports of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee on a semi-annual basis, and developed strategies and programming for East Jerusalem, Gaza, capacity development and the Consolidated Appeal for humanitarian action.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

95. In 2011, the Palestinian Authority struggled to meet its financial obligations, as expenditures were mostly in line with the budget but revenue was less than projected, partly owing to lower-than-expected growth, and external financing fell short of the budget target. That led the Palestinian Authority to accumulate approximately $540 million in arrears. The external financing requirement for 2012 is estimated at $1.1 billion. Timely donor support to bridge this shortfall — combined with the uninterrupted flow of clearance revenue collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority — will be essential to meeting the Palestinian Authority's financial obligations in the coming year.

Donor coordination

96. The Local Aid Coordination Structure continued to serve as a key forum for discussing and providing input to new sector strategies and the National Development Plan 2011-2013. The coordination of humanitarian advocacy and information, led by the Secretariat Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, also continued.

97. Two meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee were held. The Joint Liaison Committee, a tripartite coordination mechanism including the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and representatives of the international community, also met twice.

V. Unmet needs

98. The 2011 Consolidated Appeal requested a revised amount of $537 million for critical humanitarian activities, of which 57 per cent was funded. The 2012 Consolidated Appeal requests $417 million, of which 38 per cent was funded as of April. Additional support is also urgently needed for the UNRWA core budget, which faces a shortfall of $70 million for 2012, as well as its 2012 Emergency Appeal for $379 million, of which only $55 million is currently funded. United Nations agencies are seeking $1.7 billion to support planned multi-annual development interventions in the context of the United Nations Medium-Term Response Plan. This funding would complement the $1.2 billion of ongoing United Nations recovery and development projects in Gaza and the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority-United Nations Trust Fund remains a viable mechanism for channelling support to the Medium-Term Response Plan.

VI. Challenges

99. Restrictions on movement and access, demolitions of Palestinian infrastructure and associated displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, increased. Furthermore, significant settlement activity continued to take place in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, heightening tension on the ground.

100. While the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory grew in 2011, further growth would require a revitalization of the private sector and a further easing of restrictions on movement and access.

101. The United Nations has received approval for works amounting to about $365 million in Gaza involving material that requires the approval of the Government of Israel. Maintaining a flow of approvals remained essential in serving the needs of Gaza's population.

102. Despite sound fiscal policy on the part of the Palestinian Authority, continued and predictable support to the Palestinian Authority's budget is necessary to finance the current deficit and ensure stability of the ongoing reform efforts.

VII. Conclusions

103. The operational context for the United Nations in the reporting period remained unchanged, while threats to the livelihoods of Palestinians, particularly demolitions in Area C and the continued closure of Gaza, continue to pose formidable obstacles to economic development. Despite economic improvements, persistently high unemployment and food insecurity in Gaza, the rise in demolitions and the continued closure and restrictions on the movement of people and goods hinder sustainable progress. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.